

ABBY JOHNSON KENDRICK ROBINSON GOOCH

This is a short history written by her daughter, Ellafair Foster, in 1955 or 1956 and brought up to date in May 1975.

Mother was born on a very rainy day in the year 1888 on January 22 in Colonial Diaz, Old Mexico. Grandpa was a polygamist and had moved his family to Old Mexico the fall before mother was born. They lived in a tent the first winter they were there and it was there that mother was born. The rain was so bad that the tent started to leak and they had to place pans around the bed and on the bed to keep grandma and mother dry. Grandma was grandpa's first wife and mother was their fifth child. Mother spent all of her childhood years and the first part of her married life in that Mormon colony. Her childhood memories are of the usual doings and pleasures of most children. All their playthings were homemade as it was a long trip and very expensive to go or send for things from the states. I have heard her tell how she and her half-sister who was her age, loved to play house on the roof of their home. However, it wasn't good for the roof so Grandpa forbid them to play up there. However, it was so much fun that once in a while they took a chance and played up there but they always got caught and ended up getting a switching so they finally stopped.

As a girl mother had her share of work to do to help her folks who had a candy shop, and to help keep their home neat and clean. The floors were mud but they still had to be scrubbed and cared for. What interesting stories she can tell about the good times they had when it was conference and visitors came to their home to stay. Their pleasures were simple but I am sure they enjoyed them as much or more than the pleasures of our young folks today. There were dances in the meetinghouse and plays and all the meetings and choir practice to go to. Grandpa was the manager of the dances and also the caller and always had a hand in the plays that were put on.

This was a Mormon colony and the dances were always very carefully supervised. One day some well drillers came to town and asked permission to come to the dances. It was quite a while before these men were allowed to attend the dances and then they were told of the standards and what would be expected of them. One of these men was Andrew Kendrick and because he was a nice clean fellow and very well liked, he was allowed to attend the dances and dance with the young ladies.

Then one day Mr. Kendrick brought a stranger to town with him. He was tall, dark, and a very handsome young man, and he was introduced as Burrell Kendrick, brother of Andrew. Mother lost her heart to him at once. But little good it did her as she was not allowed to dance or associate in any way with nonmembers of the church. After some time she was allowed to dance with him but that was all. He

would pass her on the street and tip his hat to her and say, "Howdy, Miss Abby," in his Texas drawl.

Mother was working for a lady who had a new baby when she received an invitation from Burrell asking to take her to the dance. How she wanted to go and how unhappy she was that she had to tell him that she couldn't go with him. Grandpa was very strict and his word was law.

Sometime later Grandpa came home and said that the two Kendrick boys were being baptized. Mother was so happy that she expressed her happiness in words. She said that Grandpa looked at her and wanted to know why she was so happy. She realized that she had about given herself away so she quickly said that she was always happy when anyone joined the church. Grandpa just looked at her and smiled with a twinkle in his eye. Mother was just sure that Burrell wouldn't ask her to go with him again, but he did. Mother was just seventeen when she first met him and she was just about twenty when they were married.

My father worked and saved his money so they could make the long trip to Salt Lake City and be married in the temple. What a honeymoon they had! On the way to Salt Lake there were several couples who were all going to be married. They were married on the 9 October 1907. For their honeymoon they went first up to Idaho Falls where mother had a sister living and they stayed there quite a while and father worked for a while. They then went back to Salt Lake and then down through Los Angeles where they went for a ride on a boat and mother really got seasick. From Los Angeles they went to Marathon Texas to visit father's folks. Grandpa and Grandma Kendrick were really very unhappy to think that both of their sons had become Mormons when they were such staunch Baptists. (Sue's note: Methodists)

When they returned back to Mexico, they bought a small home and father went back to his well drilling. He was usually gone all week and got home for the weekend so he could go to his meetings and be with mother. The next July they had a lovely baby boy who they named Charles Burrell Kendrick, Jr. He was a beautiful baby I know from seeing his picture. He was just eight months old when he was suddenly taken sick and died before father could be notified and get home. Poor mother, to bear such sorrow alone.

Then in January of the following year they had another little boy born on Mother's birthday and they named him Elmer Kenyon, after the two grandfathers. Two years later in December, they had a little black-eyed black-haired girl they named Loie, after mother's sister. During this time father spent the biggest part of his time away from mother at his work.

Then came the trouble with the Mexicans. This was the year 1912 and was during the Mexican Revolution. The Americans were finally ordered out of their homes after many trying and terrifying ordeals. What stories mother told about those terrible days. They were given just a few hours to pack their belongings and leave their homes. The women and children were stacked like sardines into trains and sent across the line into the states. Mother was not with her father and mother but she did have some friends and a sister on the same train with her. What thoughts

must have gone through their heads as they pulled out and left their husbands there? They didn't know if they would ever see them again.

Father was working for a big company and they made arrangements for hotel accommodations for all the women and children. What a terrible blow to find that through some error her name had been omitted from the list. She finally found a room for herself and her babies and that is a story in and of itself. Through her faith and courage she was taken care of and provided for. What stories she can tell about this time of her life. She has always had a very strong testimony of the gospel and exceptional faith and it is no wonder when you know some of the trials and tribulations she had as a young wife and mother.

Mother and father and some of her folks and father's brother Andrew decided to go to Idaho and settle. They homesteaded some dry farms just east of Idaho Falls. It is a good thing that mother didn't know what lied ahead of her, as the worst was yet to come. They had all lost everything they had except for the few things they had managed to bring with them and so they all had to start all over again. Mother was expecting another little one in January and Loie wouldn't be one until December and Kenyon would be three in January. The trip was not easy for her I know.

After they filed on the dry farm land, father and Uncle Andrew decided they would have to go to Nevada where they could get work and earn enough money to improve their farms. They left in October and they were to send for mother and Uncle Andrew's wife, Aunt S.E, as soon as they could find a place to live. There aren't any words that could express the heartbreak and grief in the tragedy that followed. Enough to say that father was accidentally killed and through a series of circumstances, was buried before mother ever received word that he was dead.

There she was, just twenty-four years old with two small children and another expected in two and a half months. She had her father and mother but they weren't young anymore and they had lost all their worldly possessions and had to start over again, too. We are told that God chastiseth those whom he loves. How he must have loved mother. Anyone with less faith and love of the gospel would have fallen beneath the load. She had her moments of deep despair and hopelessness but she was always blessed with wise counsel and advice from her father and from good friends who were raised up to help her.

The people of Iona Idaho were always enshrined in her heart for their goodness and kindness to her during that most difficult time of her life. They gave her and her parents a place to live and saw that they had food to eat. The young girls gave her a baby shower and were considerate of her. Bishop Rockwood of the Iona ward was a blessing in her life.

Mother got a letter from Uncle Andrew telling her that father had been buried without his temple clothes. What a bitter blow. She knew how precious and holy his temple clothes were to him and her grief was bitter and despairing. Bishop Rockwood found her crying and through grandpa he found out what the trouble was. He looked at mother and then said, "Sister Kendrick, was your husband worthy of his temple clothes?" Mother was beyond words so grandpa answered him, "If ever

a man was worthy of his clothes, it was Burrell.” And Bishop Rockwell answered with words that mother never could forget. “How much better to be worthy and not buried in them, than to be buried in them unworthily.” He was a wonderful man and a true friend to mother as long as he lived.

On January 26, 1913, after father was killed on the 8th of November, mother gave birth to a baby girl. How grateful I am to be born of so wonderful and brave a mother. I shed tears every time I think of how grief-stricken she was and how alone she felt without my father beside her when I was born.

There is an incident or two that I would like to relate here. Some time after I was born, I don’t know just how long, a man came to the door and asked for mother. When she came to the door she met Brother Thomas Nixon. Mother didn’t know him but she had met his wife. He introduced himself and told her that if there was ever anything he could do to help her he would appreciate it if she let him know. If she ever wanted to go into Idaho Falls for anything he would be glad to take her. Mother thanked him and told him she would let him know. She thought it rather strange that he should come to her and one day she mentioned it to Uncle Shirl, her sister’s husband who was working for Brother Nixon. Then he told her what Brother Nixon had told him.

It seems that one night Brother Nixon had a dream or vision. He said a tall, dark young man came to him and pointed to a sad looking young woman sitting on a bench with three small children. The young man had told him that anything he could do to help her would be appreciated by him. Brother Nixon didn’t recognize the young woman but some time later in town he saw mother and recognized her and asked his wife who she was and then told her what he had dreamed. That is when he went to see mother and offered his help. Until the day he died he was a faithful friend and kept track of her. Mother never told him that she knew about his dream. It made her realize that because father was gone it did not mean that he had left her alone. I know how very grateful she always was for her kind and faithful friends.

Mother was always afraid of staying alone and when she was preparing to live alone, she was terrified but said nothing of it to anybody. How wonderful to have a blessing given to her at that time that told her that she should lay her body down at night and she should sleep and rest at peace in her mind. Surely the Lord was very mindful of her needs. I can say with sincerity that from that time on she was never afraid to stay alone and she spent many years alone.

Her father said something to her one day that she never forgot, and after hearing her tell about it I have never forgotten it either. “Anything that happens to you on this earth will do one of two things. It will either sweeten your life or make you bitter. Don’t ever let it make you bitter.” She never forgot that and thru all her trials and tribulations she was never bitter.

Father left her no insurance so mother was completely on her own and only Father in Heaven knows what she went through in caring for three small children and making a living for them.

She had thought that she would never love and marry again but time is a kind healer and when I was about six years old, she met and married, after much indecision, Nathan Robinson. This was in 1918 and they lived in Pocatello. He had four children all older than hers. There isn't room to tell of all the problems they had. It is no easy matter to mix two families and then they had four children born to them quite close together: Burrell Oscar was born 1 Sept. 1919-- Lorin Eugene born 11 Dec. 1920-- Ilene Born Jan 29, 1922 and Don Leslie born 13 Dec. 1923. Dad was fourteen years older than mother but they truly loved one another. If mother hadn't been an exceptional fine manager there would have been times when the family would have gone hungry. Dad was not very well as he had asthma. Dad was always loving and kind to mother's children and we all loved him. He was the only father I knew.

Years have a habit of slipping by and the family grew up and married and had children of their own. In June of 1941, Dad, who hadn't been well for years, had a stroke while he was at work. He was a railroad brakeman and he was stricken on the train between Pocatello and Montpelier, Idaho. They took him off the train in Montpelier and called mother. Again death parted her from her partner and left her alone to face hard and fearful years. Burrell was 21 and in the National Guard. He was living in California. Lorin was 20 and was in Chicago working and going to a trade school. Ilene was 19 and working in Pocatello. Don the youngest was 17 and still in high school. Life was hard enough and to become harder after Dec. 7th and Pearl Harbor. All three of the boys were in the service. Lorin married and with one child was a pilot and completed his missions of bombing Germany and her Allies while Burrell spent two and a half years in the Aleutian Islands besides time in England and France. Don was also a pilot but through the goodness of our Heavenly Father he was never sent over seas, much to his unhappiness. I know how very grateful mother was to have her boys return home safe and sound.

Time is a healer again and in 1947 when she met Joseph Gooch she once again decided that she had a chance for happiness. November 21, 1947 was her wedding day and she was a truly happy woman. They had a reception at her home in Pocatello and then they moved to Blackfoot Idaho, where Dad Gooch lived. She gained five more children with her marriage. Mary Spencer, Ritchie Gooch, Deon Ostergard, Gilbert Gooch, and Myrtle Jepson; also numerous grandchildren whom she loved and who loved her. Dad Gooch was loved by all mother's children and grandchildren.

They were very happy. They fished together, went to the temple, did church work, served on a stake mission, and mother spent much time and money on genealogy. She has served as Primary President, Relief Society President, Spiritual Living leader for ten years, and visiting teacher leader for several years. She loved young people and taught the Beehive girls and older girls in Primary. She compiled a history of her life in pictures besides a detailed history of her life.

On the 28th of August 1970 Dad Gooch was in a terrible auto accident and 13 weeks later died. I spent most of those 13 weeks in Blackfoot with mother and after Dad's death Ilene and I broke up housekeeping for her and she came to Nampa to live with Ray and me because she was unable to live alone. She took many bad falls and she

was blessed not to have broken anything during that time. She got steadily worse and her mind was not good. She lived with us until July of 1972 when we put her in a nursing home while I went to the hospital for surgery.

When I developed phlebitis, the doctor said I would no longer be able to care for her, so she remained in the rest home and passed on to join her first love after being parted for 62 years. She passed away 4 November 1974, just 4 days short of 62 years. She had wanted to go so badly that it was a blessing and relief to know she was free from her mortal body. She was buried by her well-loved brothers, Elmer and Lorin in the Rose Hill Cemetery in Idaho Falls, Idaho. She left 6 children, 25 grandchildren, 50 great grandchildren, and 3 great great grandchildren. She has always been an inspiration to me and a wonderful example for her children. She lived her religion to the best of her ability and knowledge. She has made mistakes but never knowingly. She was talented in poetry; some of her poems have been published in church magazines. She wrote words for songs for special occasions and was a good singer and teacher.

Her faith has pulled her through serious illness and her testimony of the gospel shone brighter each year. May I never forget the examples of love and service and obedience she taught me through words and her own life and actions. Surely my father welcomed her with opened arms as she joined him in that eternal world she lived for, and our Heavenly Father said "Enter in thou good and faithful servant and receive thy reward."